



NUGGETS/AVALANCHE PREP LEAGUE



SPONSORED BY **IKON**
Office Solutions

OFFICIAL RULE BOOK

FLAG FOOTBALL

August 10, 2005

Table of Contents

The Game	3
The Field	5
Equipment	6
The Clock	7
Kicks	10
Passes	11
Handing	12
Deflagging	13
Scoring	14
Tie Game	15
Substitutions	16
Interference	17
Unfair and Unsportsmanlike Acts	18
Fouls and Penalties	20
Summary of Penalties	25
Glossary	27

The Game

1. The Game

The Game shall be played between two teams of eight players each on a rectangle field with an official football. The game shall be played under the supervision of two officials. The officials are:

Referee
Umpire

It is suggested that playing time be kept on a football timer operated by the Referee, but a game worker designated to keep the time will be on the sideline.

Team representatives, including players, team managers, coaches, administrative representatives, and group members are subject to the rules of the game, and shall be governed by the decisions of the Officials assigned to the game. A Referee's decision to forfeit is final.

2. Length of Game

Playing time shall be 50 minutes in duration divided into two 25-minute periods, with a five-minute half time intermission. In the case where overtime is used, there will be a two-minute intermission.

3. Scrimmage

All plays from scrimmage must be started by a legal snap from a point between the inbound lines. An Official shall mark the line of scrimmage.

4. Team Rosters

All coaches must present a team roster to the opposing coach and the scorers table five minutes prior to the start of the game. The roster must be typed and include the name of each athlete, the jersey number of each athlete, and the grade level of each athlete. All ineligible players must be crossed out on the roster. **If a coach fails to provide a roster as described above the opposing team will be awarded 2 points before the game begins.**

5. Eligibility

All athletes must have achieved the proper grades as described in the Middle School Athletic Handbook to be eligible for play.

6. **Start of the Game**

No game can start without providing the visiting coach a maximum of 15 minutes warm-up after their team has arrived at the field. The visiting coach may shorten the warm-up time if desired.

A team must begin the game with a minimum of seven players. Game time is forfeit time.

Each period will start with the ball being placed on the 20 yard line. All penalties will be either 4 yards, 8 yards, or 12 yards. Three minutes before the start of the game the Referee shall toss a coin in the presence of the opposing Field Captains, after first designating which captain shall call the fall of the coin.

The captain winning the toss shall choose one of the following options:

- Play defense first
- Play offense first
- Designate which goal his team will defend
- Defer choice to the second half

The loser of the toss shall make a choice of the remaining options. Before the start of the second period, the choosing of options will be reversed.

7. **Advancing the Ball**

A team, in possession of the ball, shall have four consecutive downs to advance the ball to the next zone line-to-gain by scrimmage. Any down may be repeated if provided for by the rules.

8. **Scoring**

Each team shall be allowed the opportunity to advance the ball across the opponent's goal line by running or passing. Teams shall be awarded points for scoring according to the rules, and unless the game is forfeited, the team having the larger score at the end of the game shall be the winning team.

When Team A leads Team B by 17 points inside the final two minutes of the game, the clock will not stop unless a timeout is called by Team B.

9. **Team Captains**

Each team manager or coach shall designate to the Referee the Team Captain(s). If more than one player is designated, a Speaking Captain must be selected to make all decisions. A Field Captain's first choice of any option shall be irrevocable.

10. **Disqualified or Ejected Players**

A disqualified or ejected player must always leave the game and MUST physically leave the playing area.

The Field

1. **Size**

The field size shall be 80 yards by 40 yards with a ten yard end zone. However, in case of facility limitations, distances of length and width of a field can be modified.

2. **Marking**

The boundaries of the field should be lined with additional lines at 20 yard intervals from goal line to goal line. It is also recommended that a hash mark be placed 5 yards from each sideline on each 20 yard line and shall run parallel to the sideline. These zone markings may be changed according to field dimensions. Marking DPS fields is at the discretion of the grounds department. Marking City fields is at the discretion of the parks department.

3. **Team Box**

On each side of the field, a team box or area is designated between the 20 yard lines for the teams, coaches, and authorized team attendants. When the playing field is modified, so should the team box area.

4. **Lines**

The lines bounding the sidelines and the end zones are out-of-bounds in their entirety, and the inbound area is bound by the lines. Goal lines for each team shall be established at opposite ends of the field. Soft, flexible pylons or cones shall be placed at the inside corner of each of the intersections of the sidelines with the goal lines and the end lines. The entire width of each goal line shall be a part of the end zone.

Equipment

1. **The Ball**

The official ball shall be a Baden FX500Y. The Referee shall be the sole judge of any ball offered for play and may change the ball during play at his or her discretion. During the game each team must use a legal ball of its choice when it is in possession. The home team is responsible for providing the game balls.

2. **Uniforms**

Players of opposing teams should wear contrasting colored jerseys with numbers on the back. The shorts must be a different color than the flags. The home team shall make any changes required. **No article of clothing may cover any portion of a player's flag.**

Penalty: 4 yards

3. **Mouth Guards**

All players must wear a mouth guard while on the field. If a player is found without a mouth guard they will have to leave the game for at least one play. They may reenter once the mouth guard is in place.

Penalty: 4 yards

4. **Shoes**

Shoes must be of either a leather or canvas upper with a one-piece molded bottom, which may or may not have rubber cleats. Under no circumstances may metal tipped cleats be worn. If a player is wearing illegal shoes during the game (from inspection to the end of the game), that player will be charged with a penalty and will be removed from the game until the correct shoes are worn.

Penalty: 12 yards

5. **Flags**

Each player on the field must wear the league issued belt with 3 flags unaltered in any way. The flags must be of contrasting color to the pants.

6. **Illegal Equipment**

The use of headgear, of any nature, shoulder pads, body pads, or shoes with metal tipped cleats, regardless of material is prohibited. Additionally, any unyielding or dangerous equipment is prohibited. Players may use an ace bandage. Knee braces must be covered by a soft yielding material not to exceed 3/8" thickness. No jewelry of any kind can be worn.

The Clock

1. **Running Clock**

The clock will start when the ball is legally snapped. It will run continuously for the first and second half unless stopped for:

- Time-outs, called either by the Official or either team
- Officials Discretion
- Last two minutes of the game

If the clock is stopped by a team time out and the Referee does not signal, the game clock starts when the ball is snapped.

2. **Final Two Minutes**

Approximately two minutes before the end of the game, the Referee shall stop the clock and inform both captains of the playing time remaining. The previous play determines when the clock will re-start. During the final two minutes of the game the clock will stop for:

- Incomplete pass, re-starts when ball is legally snapped
- Out-of-bounds, re-starts when ball is legally snapped
- Penalty and administration, re-start is dependent on the previous play
- Touchdowns, re-starts when ball is legally snapped
- Team time outs, re-starts when ball is legally snapped
- First down, re-start is dependent on the previous play
- Referee's discretion, re-starts at his discretion
- Fair catch, re-starts when ball is legally snapped
- Try-for-point after a touchdown - There is no time charged for these plays, it is considered a free play

3. **Unfair Tactics**

The Referee may order the game clock started or stopped whenever either team is trying to conserve or consume playing time by tactics obviously unfair.

Penalty: 4 yards for first offense and 12 yards for each subsequent offense

4. **Time Outs**

The Referee shall declare a time out when he suspends play for any reason. Each time out shall be charged either to the Referee or to one of the teams. A charged time out, requested by any captain, shall not exceed one minute. Other time outs may be longer only if the Referee deems it necessary to remove an injured player.

The Referee shall warn both teams five seconds before a charged timeout expires. The team then has 25 seconds to put the ball in play. When two timeouts have been charged to a team in the same half, the Referee shall notify the Field Captain and Coach of that team.

A team is allowed to call time out in the second half only if they are behind in the score or ahead by less than 20 points. If a team scores to make the scoring margin less than 20 points, a team may again use one of their two time outs per half.

The Referee may still declare an Official's time out for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules, as discussed in Number 8, "Discretionary Time Out".

5. **Coach-Official Conference**

During tournament play, the Captain or Coach may call time out to review a misapplication of a rule or penalty. Judgment calls will not be reviewed. If the call is reversed, that team's time out is restored. If the call is not reversed, that time out is consumed and counts against their total of two time outs per half. If the team has used their two time outs, a delay of game penalty will be assessed.

6. **Charged Time Out**

Each team is entitled to two charged time outs during each half without penalty. Successive charged time outs may be granted to each team during a dead ball period. If the ball is dead and a team has not exhausted its charged time outs, the Referee shall allow a time out and charge that team.

7. **Official Time Out**

The Referee shall declare an Official's time out when the game clock is stopped to complete a penalty.

The Referee may declare an Official's time out for any contingency not elsewhere covered by the rules. If a time out is for repair or replacement of player equipment which becomes illegal through play, the Referee shall charge himself. The Referee shall also charge himself when an injured player is designated.

8. **Delaying the Game**

Each team shall have its players on the field at the scheduled time for the beginning of each period. All players must have their flags in legal position.

Penalty: 12 yards from the succeeding spot

9. **Change in Playing Time**

Before the start of the game, playing time may be shortened by mutual agreement of the Field Captains and the Referee. Anytime during the game, the playing time of any remaining period(s) may be shortened by mutual agreement of the opposing Captains and the Referee.

A period may be extended by an untimed down, only when during the last timed down, one of the following occurred:

A touchdown was scored, the try-for point is attempted as a part of the same half.

There was an inadvertent whistle and the down is to be replayed, the down must be replayed as part of that half.

The penalty from a foul by the defense was accepted, the half must be extended.

There was a fair catch interference and the offended team accepts an awarded fair catch, the half may be extended and the ball put in play by a snap.

If there was fair catch interference and the offended team accepts the distance penalty, the half must be extended and down replayed.

If there was a deliberate foul by the punting team and the penalty is not declined, the half must be extended.

Kicks

1. Legal Kicks

The only legal kick is a punt by a player of the team in possession. Kicking the ball in any other manner is illegal. Any punt continues to be a punt until it is caught or recovered by a player or becomes dead.

2. Punts

All punts must be announced, there are no quick kicks. The kicking team (K) must announce to the Referee before the ball is ready for play that they are going to punt. After announcement the punt must be attempted. **Exception:** If a penalty occurs anytime during this down which results in K being in a position of fourth down again, K then must re-declare the punt. No direct snap is allowed. The punter must be at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage when receiving the snap. After receiving the snap, the punter must kick the ball immediately and in a continuous motion.

Penalty: 4 yards for first offense, unsportsmanlike conduct 12 yards and loss of down for each subsequent offense

If a punt goes out-of-bounds, between the goal lines, or comes to rest inbound untouched and no player of either team attempts to secure it, the ball becomes dead and belongs to the receiving team (R) at the dead ball spot.

If any ball touches the ground prior to the punt (i.e. muffed snap), the ball becomes dead and belongs to R at the spot the ball makes contact with the ground.

3. **Punt Formation**

K must have all but the punter on the line of scrimmage. R must have all but two players on the line of scrimmage.

Penalty: 4 yards from previous spot

4. **Catch and Touched**

A punt is a change of possession. K cannot advance. If R drops the ball or fails to recover the ball the ball is dead.

Passes

1. **Legal Forward Pass**

During a scrimmage down and before a team possession has changed, a forward pass may be thrown provided the ball, when it leaves the passer's hand, is on the offense (A)'s side of the line of scrimmage. All players are eligible to touch or catch a pass. Only one forward pass can be thrown per down.

An offensive player, who goes out-of-bounds on his own volition during a passing down, loses eligibility until the ball has been touched by an opponent.

Penalty: 12 yards (Illegal participation)

A forward pass is completed when caught by A in bounds. It is intercepted when caught by B in bounds.

When a legal forward pass touches the ground or anything out-of-bounds it becomes dead and is ruled as an incomplete pass. The ball belongs to the passing team at the spot of previous snap, unless a new series has been created. In such a case, it belongs to B at the previous spot.

2. **Illegal Forward Pass**

A forward pass is illegal if A is beyond the line of scrimmage when the ball leaves the hand or thrown after a team possession has changed during the down, thrown

intentionally out-of-bounds to save loss of yardage, there is more than one forward pass per down, or a player throws a ball to himself untouched by a defensive player. If an offensive player causes the ball to go over the line of scrimmage then brings the ball back across the scrimmage line in order to try a legal forward pass, this is illegal.

Penalty: 8 yards and loss of down

If a player catches an illegal forward pass, the ball continues in play until declared dead.

When an illegal forward pass touches the ground or goes out-of-bounds the ball becomes dead and belongs to the passing team, at the spot from where the pass was thrown, unless a new series of downs has been created (i.e., Two passes were made in the same play. The first pass was legal and resulted in a first down. The second pass was illegal.) In such a case, the ball belongs to the passing team if after the enforcement of the penalty, the ball is left in advance of the zone line-to-gain. If after the penalty, the ball did not make the zone line-to-gain and the foul occurred during the fourth down, the ball belongs to the opponents.

3. **Backward Pass**

A backward pass may be caught in flight in bounds by any player and advanced.

A backward pass in flight shall not be batted forward by the passing team.

A backwards pass is dead at the spot when it goes out of bounds or touches the ground or the goal line. The ball belongs to the team last in possession, unless lost on downs.

A ball carrier may pass the ball backward or lose player possession by a fumble at any time except if intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or to avoid the capture.

Penalty: 4 yards, clock starting or stopping is at Referee's Discretion

4. **Legal Catch**

One foot inbound with possession of the ball constitutes a legal catch.

Handing

1. **Handing Forward**

No player may hand the ball forward except as follows: A, who is behind the line of scrimmage, may hand the ball forward

to a backfield teammate who is also behind the line of scrimmage,

or

to a teammate who was on the scrimmage line when the ball was snapped, provided that teammate left the line of scrimmage, faced his own endline and was at least one yard behind the scrimmage line when the player received the ball.

Penalty: 4 yards from the succeeding spot

2. **Handing Backward**

A ball carrier may hand the ball backward at any time. Exception: Intentionally thrown out-of-bounds to conserve time or prevent from being deflagged.

Penalty: 4 yards, clock starting or stopping is at Referee's discretion

Deflagging

1. **Flag Removal**

Offensive players must have possession of the ball before they can legally be deflagged. A flag removed inadvertently (not removed by grabbing and pulling) does not cause play to stop. It should continue as if the flag had not been removed. In all situations where a play is in progress and a ball carrier loses his flags either accidentally or inadvertently, the deflagging reverts to a two-hand touch of the ball carrier between the armpits and knees. It is **unsportsmanlike conduct**, and penalized as such, for a player to remove his own flags before or during a live ball period.

2. **Capture**

When the flag belt is clearly taken from the ball carrier the down shall end and the ball is declared dead. A player who removes the flag from the ball carrier should immediately hold the flag belt above his head or drop the flag to the ground. If a flag inadvertently falls to the ground, a two-handed tag between the armpits and knees constitutes capture.

3. **After a Score**

After each score the player scoring must walk to the nearest Official with the ball held over his head. The Official will inspect the flags and belt. If the flag belt is tied or illegally fastened it is a foul.

Penalty: Player ejected from the game, play disallowed, loss of down, and 12 yards from the previous spot

If the scoring players team member or fan removes their belt (in observance of an official), the score will not count and a 4 yard penalty will be issued from the previous spot.

4. **Flag Guarding**

Ball carriers shall not protect their flags by blocking with arms or hands the opportunity of an opponent to pull or remove a flag.

Penalty: 8 yards

5. **Illegal Contact**

In an attempt to remove a flag, both A and B are responsible for avoiding head-on collisions. B may contact the body of A with their hands, but B cannot contact A's face or any part of the neck or head. A shall not attempt to run over B. B may not knock the ball loose after A has possession nor hold, grasp, push, knock the ball carrier down, or obstruct forward progress in an attempt to remove the flag. B may not push out of bounds.

Scoring

1. **Points**

The following methods shall be used in scoring a game:

Touchdown	6 points
Safety	2 points
Forfeited Game	1 point
Successful Try-For-points	
Running, from 3 yards	1 point
Passing, from 3 yards	2 points

2. **Touchdown**

A touchdown shall be scored for the team to which the ball legally belongs, when a down is completed and any part of the ball is on, above, or behind the opponent's goal line.

An opportunity to score one or two points shall be granted a team scoring a touchdown. There shall be one scrimmage play unless charged by penalty.

3. **Try for Point**

The point(s) shall be awarded if the try results in what would have been a touchdown under rules governing play at other times.

If an offsetting foul occurs during the down, the down shall be replayed. When a distance penalty is incurred by Team B, during a successful try, Team A will accept the score with enforcement of the penalty from the 20 yard line.

4. **Safety**

When the ball is out-of-bounds behind a goal line (except from an incomplete forward pass) or when the ball becomes dead in possession of a player on, above, or behind the player's own goal line, it is a safety if the defending team is responsible for the ball being on or behind that goal line.

When a foul or illegal pass occurs in the end zone the offending team's goal line it is a safety.

A muffed snap in the end zone.

After a safety is scored, the ball shall belong to the defending team at its own 20 yard line and that team shall put the ball in play.

Tie Game

1. **Review**

When the score is tied at the end of the second period, the Referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a two minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their Coaches. Both Officials will assemble at the 50 yard line, review the procedure and determine the number of remaining second period time outs for each team. The Referee will go to one team and the Umpire to the other team to inform the Coaches of the time outs remaining for each team. No additional time outs will be provided for overtime play.

2. **Coin Toss**

At the coin toss in the center of the field, the visiting team Captain shall be given the privilege of calling the coin while it is in the air. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense, or of designating the direction of the field at which the ball

will be put in play. The loser of the toss will have his choice of the remaining options. To indicate which team will go on offense, the referee will have that Captain face the goal toward which his team will advance and indicate this with the first down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive Captain with his back toward the goal which he will defend.

3. **Procedure**

Each team will be permitted a maximum of four downs to advance the ball starting from their opponents' 20 yard line. The team that scores the most points or gains the most yards, in the event neither team scores, will be declared the winner and will be awarded 1 point in order to break the tied score.

A touchdown and point after touchdown attempt by team A will result in a change of possession regardless of how many downs were used to score.

4. **Rule Changes**

All game rules will apply except:

The line-to-gain shall always be the goal line

No try will be made if the winner of the game has been determined

If B scores a safety or a touchdown, during A's possession, the game is ended

If a safety is scored by A, the succeeding spot will be the 10 yard line in possession of B, provided they have not already had their series

If B gains possession, and does not score, then down and series for A ends immediately

Substitutions

1. **Entry**

No substitute shall enter during a down. Between downs any number of eligible substitutes may replace players provided the substitution is completed by having the replaced players off the field before the ball becomes live. An incoming substitute must enter the field directly from his team area. A replaced player must leave the field at the sideline nearest his team area prior to the ball being snapped.

Penalty: 4 yards

2. **Re-Entry**

During the same dead ball interval, no substitute shall become a player then withdraw. No player shall withdraw and then re-enter as a substitute unless a dead ball foul occurs or there is a charged time out or the period ends.

3. **Ready for Play**

Each substitute shall be in uniform, ready for play, with flags in position.

Penalty: 4 yards from previous spot

Interference

1. **Pass Interference**

During a down in which a legal forward pass is thrown, contact which interferes with an eligible receiver who is beyond five yards down field, is pass interference unless it occurs when two or more eligible receivers make a simultaneous and bona fide attempt to reach, contact, or bat the pass. The pass does not have to be catchable. Only one chuck of the receiver is allowed within the first five yards.

2. **Offensive Interference**

After the ball is snapped, and until it has been touched by a receiver, there shall be no offensive interference beyond the five yard zone while the ball is in flight.

Penalty: 8 yards and loss of down

3. **Defensive Interference**

After the pass is thrown by the thrower, and until it is touched, there shall be no defensive interference beyond the five yard zone while the ball is in flight.

Penalty: spot of the foul and automatic first down

4. **Fair Catch Interference**

While any punt is in flight beyond K's line of scrimmage, K shall not touch the ball in flight, touch the receiver, or obstruct R's path to the ball. This prohibition applies even when no signal is given, but does not apply if the act is after the punt has been touched by R.

Penalty: 12 yards at the previous spot or an awarded fair catch at the spot of interference

Unfair and Unsportsmanlike Acts

1. Unfair and Unsportsmanlike Acts

If a team refuses to play within two minutes after ordered to play by the Referee, or if play is interfered with by an obviously unfair or unsportsmanlike act not specifically covered by the rules, or if a team repeatedly commits fouls which can be penalized only by halving the distance to its goal line, the Referee may enforce any penalty he considers equitable, including the awarding of a score. A score (touchdown) shall be awarded when B tackles A on a breakaway or inside the twenty (20) yard line of B. For refusal to play, or for repeated fouls, the Referee shall, after one warning, forfeit the game to the opponents.

Penalty 12 yards

2. Personal Fouls

No player shall commit a personal foul during a period or an intermission. Any act prohibited hereunder or any other act of unnecessary roughness is a personal foul.

No player shall block in a manner that would cause his feet, knees, or legs to strike an opponent (all blocking shall be with the feet in contact with the ground)

There shall be no tripping or clipping

There shall be no contact with an opponent who is on the ground

The runner shall not be thrown to the ground

There shall be no unnecessary roughness of any nature

The ball carrier shall not deliberately drive or run into a defensive player

The center may not be touched until he has begun his pass pattern or stood up to block

Penalty: 12 yards

3. Prohibited Acts

A penalty shall be assessed if any player, substitute, coach, or others subject to the rules commits any unsportsmanlike act including, but not limited to:

Abusive or insulting language

Any act of unfair play

Second encroachment in a game by B when A has less than 5 yards to go for a first down or touchdown

Managers, coaches or others on the field of play at any time

Players leaving the field of play other than during the intermission, at half time, time outs, or legal substitution

Interfering with a player or any play while the ball is live

Using a “hide-out or sleeper play”, by placing a player(s) near the sideline who were not within 15 yards of the ball from the time of the ready-for-play signal to the snap

The punter delays the kick

Attempting to substitute a suspended player

B intentionally pulling or removing a flag from an A player without the ball

Diving to advance the ball for a touchdown or first down - spot of foul

Leaving feet while in possession of the ball to avoid being deflagged

Penalty for prohibited acts of personal fouls shall be 12 yards

4. Suspension From the Game

Whenever, in the judgment of any game Official, the following acts are deliberate or flagrant, the players involved shall be ejected from the game:

Using fists, kicking or kneeling

Using locked hands, elbows, or any part of the forearm or hand, except according to rules

Tackling the ball carrier as in regulation football

Roughing the punter, quarterback, or center

Any other deliberate or flagrant act

Penalty: 12 yards, if flagrant, the offender will be ejected

Fouls and Penalties

1. **Procedure After a Foul**

When a foul occurs during a live ball, the Referee shall, at the end of the down, notify the offended captain of his options. If the penalty is declined or there is a double foul, there is no loss of distance. A captain's choice of options may not be revoked. When a foul occurs during a dead ball or between downs, the ball does not become live. The Referee shall notify the offended captain of his options.

If a penalty is declined the number of the next down shall be whatever it would have been if that foul had not occurred.

2. **Fouls by Both Teams**

If offsetting fouls occur during a down, that down shall be repeated. **Exception:** If each team fouls during a down, in which there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided its foul was not prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponents foul.

When a live ball foul is followed by a dead ball foul by the opponent, the penalties are administered separately and in the order of occurrence.

3. **Foul Between Downs**

The penalty for a foul between downs is enforced from the succeeding spot. A foul following a penalty incurred after a series ends and before the next series begins shall be first down, but the zone line-to-gain shall be established before the penalty is enforced.

4. **Blocking Fouls**

Teammates of a runner or passer may interfere for him by blocking, but shall not use interlocked interference by grasping or encircling one another in any matter.

Penalty: 12 yards

The offensive block shall take place with the blocker's arms extended and palms facing the opponent. The block must be initiated on the opponent's chest or on either side. Contact that begins from behind, above the shoulders or below the waist is illegal. A blocker may use his hand or arm to break a fall or to retain his balance. A player must be on his feet before, during and after blocking. If a player turns his back on the player blocking him and the initial contact between them was legal, then clipping shall not be called. Any other block shall be illegal.

Penalty: 8 yards

The offensive team shall be prohibited from obstructing an opponent with extended hand or arm. This includes the use of a “Stiff arm” extended to ward off an opponent attempting to deflag.

Penalty: 8 yards

Defensive players may go around the offensive player’s block. The arms may not be used as a wedge but the hands may be used, if there is no holding. The application of this rule depends entirely on the judgment of the Official. A blocker may use his arms to break a fall or retain his balance.

Penalty: 8 yards

The ball carrier shall not grasp a teammate or be grasped, pulled or pushed by a teammate (i.e. a player cannot hold onto a lead blocker).

Penalty: 8 yards

5. **Multiple Fouls**

Penalties for dead ball fouls are administered separately and in order of occurrence. Dead ball fouls are not coupled with live ball fouls or other dead ball fouls to create double or multiple fouls. All unsportsmanlike fouls are penalized separately, and in addition to those occurring during a down by the same team.

When two or more live ball fouls are committed by the same team, only one penalty may be chosen except when a foul(s) for unsportsmanlike conduct follows a previous foul. In such a case, the penalty for the unsportsmanlike conduct is administered separately. The offended captain may choose which penalty will be administered or he may decline all penalties.

When both teams commit live ball fouls during the same live ball period and (a) there is no change of team possession, or (b) there was a change of team possession and the team in possession at the end of the down had fouled prior to final change of possession, it is a double foul. In (a) or (b) the penalties cancel and the down is replayed. If both teams foul during a down where there is a change of team possession, the team last gaining possession may retain the ball, provided it did not foul prior to the final change of possession and it declined the penalty for its opponent’s foul.

7. **Scrimmage Fouls**

Any infraction of the following, before the snap is a foul:

The center, after assuming the position for the snap and adjusting the ball, may neither move nor change the position of the ball in a manner simulating the beginning of a play until it is snapped. An infraction of this provision may be

penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be canceled.

The center must have both feet on the scrimmage line, and no part of his body shall be beyond the forward point of the ball.

The center shall hand or pass the ball back between his legs from its position on the ground with a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s). The ball shall leave the hand(s) in this motion. While resting on the ground and prior to the snap, the long axis must be at right angles to the scrimmage line, with neither end of the ball raised more than 45 degrees.

No players may interlock their legs at the line of scrimmage.

No player may make contact or interfere with an opponent or the ball before it is snapped. There shall be no contact with the center.

After the ball is ready-for-play and until it is snapped, no player on defense may touch the ball, nor may any player contact opponents or in any other way interfere with them. This includes standing in the zone to give defense signals, or shifting through the zone.

No player of the offensive team shall make a false start. A false start includes feigning a charge, or a play. An infraction of this rule may be penalized whether or not the ball is snapped and the penalty for any resultant encroachment or contact foul by an opponent shall be ignored.

In a snap preceded by a huddle or shift, all players of the offense must come to a complete stop and remain stationary in legal position without movement of feet, body, head, or arms for at least one full second before the ball is snapped.

Penalty: 4 yards

Any infraction of the following, when the ball is snapped is a foul:

A least four players must be on their offensive line of scrimmage. The remaining players must be either on the line of scrimmage or their backfield line.

Exception: One player may be between the line of scrimmage and backfield line if placed in a position to receive a hand-to-hand snap from between the center's legs. When in such position, the player may receive the snap himself or may go directly to any back.

All players must be inbound with only the center encroaching on the neutral zone and their feet must be stationary behind the ball.

One offensive player may be in motion, but not in motion toward the opponent's goal line. Other offensive players must be stationary in their positions without movement of the feet, body, head, or arms. The offensive team must still have four men on the offensive line of scrimmage at the time of the snap.

No offensive player, while on the scrimmage line, may receive a snap.

Shifts are allowed but shifting players must be set one second prior to the snap.

9. **Penalty Resulting in First Down**

When a scrimmage follows the penalty for a foul committed during a free kick, the down and distance established by the penalty shall be first down with the next zone line-to-gain.

After a penalty which leaves the ball in possession of Team A beyond its zone line-to-gain, or when a penalty stipulates a first down, the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with the next zone line-to-gain.

After a distance penalty for a foul committed during a down has changed during that down, the ball belongs to the team in possession when the foul occurred and the down and distance established by that penalty shall be first down with zone line-to-gain.

10. **Types of Play and Basic Enforcement Spots**

The type of play fixes the enforcement spot if a foul occurs during a down. There are two types of play, loose ball plays and running plays.

A loose ball play is action during a:

Punt

Legal forward pass

Backward pass by A from, on, or behind the scrimmage line

Loose ball play also includes the run which precedes a legal pass

When a foul occurs during a loose ball play, the basic enforcement spot is the previous spot. However, if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic enforcement spot, it is from the spot of the foul.

A running play is any action not included in a loose ball play:

Behind the line a running play includes a run which is not followed by a loose ball

Beyond the line, a running play includes any run and any loose ball which starts beyond the line following the run

A run ends when a runner loses possession, and that spot becomes the basic spot of enforcement

When a foul occurs during a running play, the basic enforcement spot is where the related run ends, which is where the ball becomes dead or where the player loses possession. However, if the foul is by the offense and occurs behind the basic enforcement spot, it is from the spot of the foul.

A measurement cannot take the ball more than half the distance from the enforcement spot to the offending team's goal line. If the penalty is greater than this, the ball is placed halfway from the enforcement spot to the goal line.

Summary of Penalties

4 Yards

- ◆ Defensive holding (automatic first down)
- ◆ Delay of game
- ◆ Illegal substitution
- ◆ False start
- ◆ Hurdling
- ◆ Any illegal act by the snapper
- ◆ Encroachment (12 yards for second violation when A has 5 yards or less to go for a touchdown or first down)
- ◆ Less than 4 players on A's line at snap
- ◆ Illegal position at snap
- ◆ Offense illegally in motion
- ◆ Illegal shift
- ◆ Illegally handing ball forward
- ◆ Article of clothing covering portion of player's flag

8 Yards

- ◆ Offensive holding
- ◆ Illegal block
- ◆ Delaying start of either half
- ◆ Interference with opponent or ball before snap
- ◆ Offensive pass interference (the down counts)
- ◆ Illegal forward pass by A or B (if by A down counts)
- ◆ Illegal use of hands
- ◆ Pushing the ball carrier
- ◆ Illegal contact

12 Yards

- ◆ Striking, kicking, kneeing, tripping, clipping
- ◆ Striking head
- ◆ Unsportsmanlike conduct by player or bench
- ◆ Interlocked interference
- ◆ Roughing the passer or center (Automatic first down)
- ◆ Quick kick
- ◆ Fighting
- ◆ Illegal Participation
- ◆ Diving to make first down or touchdown

Spot of Foul

- ◆ Defensive pass interference (Automatic first down)

Forfeiture of Game

- ◆ Failure to play within two minutes when ordered by the Referee
- ◆ Repeatedly committing fouls in an attempt to delay the game
- ◆ Less than seven players at game time
- ◆ Forfeiture of game is not a penalty, but an edict by the Referee.
- ◆ Any flagrant foul, in addition to the yardage penalty, results in disqualification.
- ◆ Ejection for fighting in tournament play is disqualification for entire game.

Glossary

Back	Any player who is legally behind the line of scrimmage when the ball is snapped.
Backfield Line	To be legally in the backfield a Team A player's head must not break the plane of the line drawn through the waistline of the nearest Team A player (except snapper) on the line of scrimmage.
Backward Pass	A live ball thrown toward or parallel to the passer's end line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. A backward pass that hits the ground is ruled the same as a fumble, dead at the spot where it hits the ground.
Ball Carrier	Player in possession of a live ball.
Ball Ready for Play	If time is in, a dead ball is ready for play when the Referee sounds the whistle and signals "ready for play". If time is out, a dead ball is ready for play when the Referee sounds the whistle and signals either "start the clock" or "ball ready for play".
Batting	Intentionally striking the ball with a hand or arm, or in other than a legal kick, with the leg or knee.
Between Downs	Interval during which the ball is dead.
Catch	Act of establishing player possession of a live ball in flight. If a player attempts a catch while in the air, the ball must be in control when the player returns to the ground with one foot inbounds.
Center	Player who snaps the ball. See Snapper.
Clipping	Running or diving into the back of an opponent; or throwing or dropping the body across the back of the leg(s) of an opponent; or pushing an opponent on the back.
Dead Ball	A ball not in play.
Dead Ball Foul	Point at which the ball last became dead.
Defensive Team	Team not in control of the ball.

Deflagging	Legal removal of a flag from an opponent in possession of the ball. Pushing, striking, holding, slapping, or tripping is not permitted.
Disqualified Player	Player who becomes ineligible from further participation in the game.
Down	Unit of the game which starts after the ball is ready for play with a snap and ends when the ball becomes dead.
Ejected Player	Player who becomes ineligible from further participation in the game.
Encroachment	The position of a player, except the snapper, any part of whose person is beyond their scrimmage line or their restraining line when the ball is about to be played.
Enforcement Spot	Point from which the penalty for a foul is enforced.
Fair Catch	Catch of a punt between the goal lines, by a player of the receiving team, who has signaled intention by extending one arm above his head and waving it from side to side more than once.
Forward Pass	A live ball thrown towards the opponents goal line. A pass continues to be a pass until it is caught or strikes the ground. Only one forward catch per down.
Foul	Rule infraction for which a penalty is prescribed.
Fumble	Loss of player possession other than handing off, passing, or punting the ball. A fumble that hits the ground is immediately considered dead.
Goal Line	A vertical plane separating an end zone from the field of play.
Handing the Ball	Transferring player possession of the ball from one teammate to another without passing or kicking it.
Holding	Grasping opponents jersey or body with the hands or encircling with the arms.
Huddle	Two or more offensive players grouped together after the ball is ready for play and before assuming scrimmage formation prior to the snap.

Hurdling	An attempt by a runner who has both feet or both knees foremost, to jump over a player on the scrimmage line or a similar jump over an opponent who is on his feet at any place.
Inbound Spot	The intersection of the nearer inbound line and the yard line passing through the dead ball spot.
Interception	Catch of an opponent's pass or fumble before it hits the ground. If a player attempts an interception while in the air, the ball must be in control when the player returns to the ground inbound.
Lineman	Any player, on his scrimmage line, when the ball is snapped.
Live Ball	A ball in play. A pass or fumble which has not yet touched the ground is a live ball in flight and therefore recoverable by either team.
Loose Ball	A live ball, not in player possession during a running play, or the interval after a legal forward pass is touched, becomes complete, incomplete or intercepted.
Loss of Down	Loss of the right to repeat the down.
Neutral Zone	Space between the two lines of scrimmage during a scrimmage down. It is the width of a football and is established when the ball is ready for play.
Muff	Touching a ball while unsuccessfully attempting to catch or recover it. All muffs which strike the ground are dead.
Offensive Team	Team in possession, or the team to which the ball belongs.
Out-of-Bounds	The point at which the ball becomes dead because of going or being declared out-of-bounds.
Pass	Throwing the ball. A pass continues to be a pass until caught, intercepted, or the ball becomes dead.
Passer	The player who has thrown a legal pass. He remains the passer while the ball is in flight.
Penalty	A loss imposed, by rule, upon a team which has committed a foul.
Player	Any one of the participants in the game at any particular time.

Possession	A player is in possession when he is both holding and controlling the ball. A team is in possession when one of its players is in possession; while a punt is being attempted; while a forward pass, thrown by one of its players, is in flight; or during a fumble, backward pass, or illegal forward pass.
Previous Spot	Point from which the ball was last put into play.
Protected Punt	A punt by team A which is made under the restrictions which prohibits either team from advancing beyond the neutral zone until the ball is kicked.
Punt	Kicking the ball by the player who drops it and kicks it before it hits the ground.
Recovery	Securing possession of a live ball after it strikes the ground. If a player attempts recovery while in the air, the ball must be in control when the player returns to the ground inbound.
Scrimmage	The interplay of the two teams during a down in which play begins with a snap and ends when the ball next becomes dead.
Scrimmage Line	Yard line, and its vertical plane, which passes through the point of the ball nearest its own goal line. To be on the line of scrimmage an offensive lineman's head must break the plane of the line drawn through the waistline on the snapper.
Shift	Simultaneous change of position by two or more offensive players after the ball is ready for play and before the snap.
Snap	Handing or passing the ball back from the position on the ground through the legs. The movement must be a quick and continuous motion of the hand(s) during which the ball actually leaves the hand(s). The ball may not be raised to move more than a 45 degree angle at the snap and the long axis of the ball must be at right angles to the scrimmage line.
Snapper	Player who snaps the ball. See Center.
Spot of the Foul	The point at which that foul occurs. If out-of-bounds between the goal lines it shall be the intersection of the nearer inbound line and the yard line extended through the spot of the foul.
Substitute	A replacement for a player or player vacancy.

Succeeding Spot	As related to a foul, the point at which the ball would have been put in play if that foul had not occurred.
Team A	Team which puts the ball in play.
Team B	Opponent of Team A.
Team K	Team which punts the ball.
Team R	Team which receives the punt.
Touching	Simultaneously placing both hands anywhere between the armpits and knees of an opponent with the ball. This includes the ball in the ball carrier possession. The feet of B may leave the ground to make a touch. Pushing, striking, slapping, or holding is not permitted. If the player trips the ball carrier in his attempt to make a diving tag it is a penalty.
Tripping to	Using the lower leg, foot, or arm extended on an obvious manner obstruct an opponent (including the ball carrier) below the knees.
Yard line	Any line on the field of play parallel to the end lines and between the goal lines.
Zone Line-to-Gain	The next zone line in advance of the ball, unless distance has been lost due to penalty or failure to gain. In such a case, the original zone in advance of the ball at the beginning of the series of downs is the zone line-to-gain.